



# CALYPTORHYNCHUS BANKSII.

## Banksian Cockatoo.

*Psittacus Banksii*, Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. i. p. 107.—Ib. Gen. Syn., p. 63. p. 109.—Parkinson's Voy., p. 144.—Cook's Voy., vol. ii. p. 18.—Shaw, Gen. Zool., vol. viii. p. 476.—Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. ii. p. 199. pl. 27 (female).

*Psittacus magnificus*, Shaw, Nat. Misc., pl. 50.

*Calyptorhynchus Banksii*, Vig. and Horsf. in Linn. Trans., vol. xv. p. 271.

————— *stellatus*, Wagl. Mon. Psitt. in Abhand., tom. i. p. 683. pl. 27 (a very young bird).—Selby in Nat. Lib. Orn., vol. vi. Parrots, p. 134.

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I HAVE abundant reasons for stating that every portion of Australia yet visited by Europeans is inhabited by members of the genus *Calyptorhynchus*, and that at least six species are now known, each of which has its own peculiar limits, beyond which it seldom or never passes. The present species, which is one of those with which we first became acquainted, and to which, as will be seen above, several specific appellations have been given, is a native of New South Wales, out of which colony I have never known it to occur, its range appearing to be limited by Moreton Bay on the east and Port Philip on the south. It is not unfrequently seen in the immediate neighbourhood of Sydney and other large towns, and it alike frequents the brushes and the more open wooded parts of the colony, where it feeds on the seeds of the *Banksiæ* and *Casuarinæ*, changing its diet however, as occasion may offer, to caterpillars, particularly those that infest the wattles and other low trees. The facility with which it procures these large grubs is no less remarkable than the structure of the bird's bill, which is admirably adapted for scooping out the wood of both the larger and smaller branches, and by this means obtaining possession of the hidden treasure.

The Banksian Cockatoo is a suspicious and shy bird, and it requires a considerable degree of caution to approach it within gun-shot; there are times however, particularly when it is feeding, when this may be more readily accomplished. It never assembles in large flocks like the White Cockatoo, but moves about either in pairs or in small companies of from four to eight in number. Its flight is heavy, and the wings are moved with a flapping, laboured motion; it seldom mounts high in the air, for although its flight is somewhat protracted, and journeys of several miles are performed, it rarely rises higher than is sufficient to surmount the tops of the lofty *Eucalypti*, a tribe of trees it often frequents, and in the larger kinds of which it almost invariably breeds, depositing its two or three white eggs in some inaccessible hole, spout or dead limb, the only nest being the rotten wood at the bottom, or the chips made by the bird in forming an excavation.

The female and young birds of both sexes differ very considerably from the old male in the marking of their plumage, and hence has arisen no end of confusion and the various names assigned to this bird; the above list of synonyms has been worked out with considerable care, and will I believe be found correct.

It is with feelings of great pleasure that I find that the term *Banksii*, having the priority, the name of the illustrious Banks, will ever be retained as the distinctive appellation of this noble and ornamental bird; and I would that it were in my power to write as many pages respecting its habits and economy as I have lines; but this task must devolve upon some future historian of the productions of a country teeming with the highest interest, and who will doubtless find occupation in investigating the minute details of that respecting which I am only able to give a general outline.

The male has the entire plumage glossy greenish black, with a broad band of rich deep vermilion across the middle of all but the two central tail-feathers, and the external web of the outer feather on each side; feet mealy brown; bill in young specimens greyish white, in old specimens black.

The female has the general plumage glossy greenish black, each feather of the head, sides of the neck and wing-coverts pale yellow; under surface crossed by narrow irregular bars of pale yellow, becoming fainter on the abdomen; under tail-coverts crossed by narrow freckled bars of yellowish red; tail banded with red, passing into sulphur-yellow on the inner margins of the feathers, and interrupted by numerous narrow irregular bars and freckles of black.

The Plate represents the male and female about two-thirds of the natural size.